



VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Ann Arbor Healthcare System

20 REASONS

Nurses Love Working for the Veterans Health Administration



The Department of Veterans Affairs is comprised of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). VHA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system, with more than 1,200 hospitals, clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and other facilities. Through VBA, VA administers a variety of benefits and services that provide financial and other forms of assistance to Servicemembers, Veterans, their dependents and survivors. And when America's heroes pass on, VA provides burial and memorial benefits for eligible service members, Veterans, and family members in 134 national cemeteries throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico.



There are *many* reasons

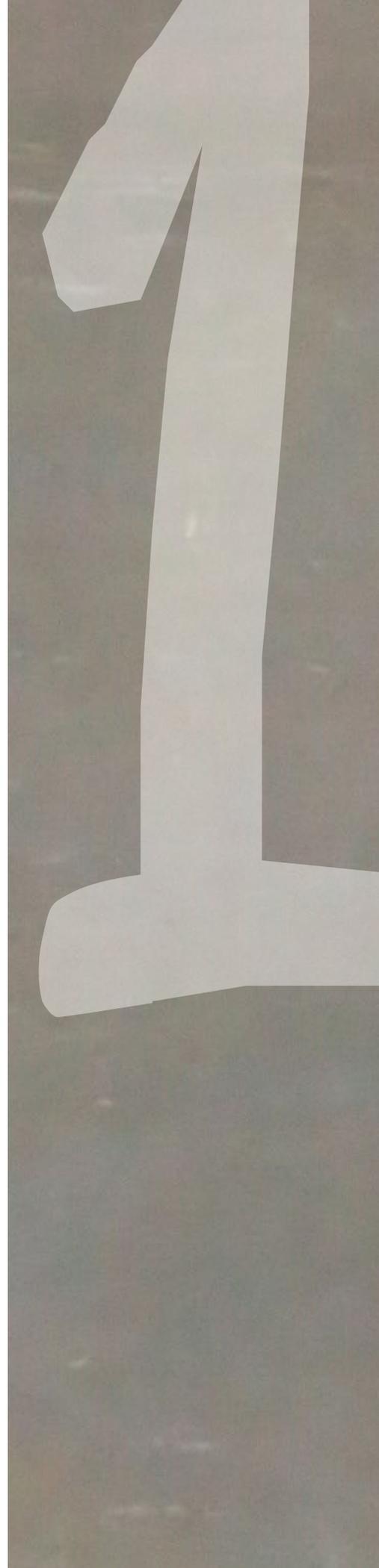
NURSES

love working for the

**Veterans Health
Administration.**

We think *you* will too.

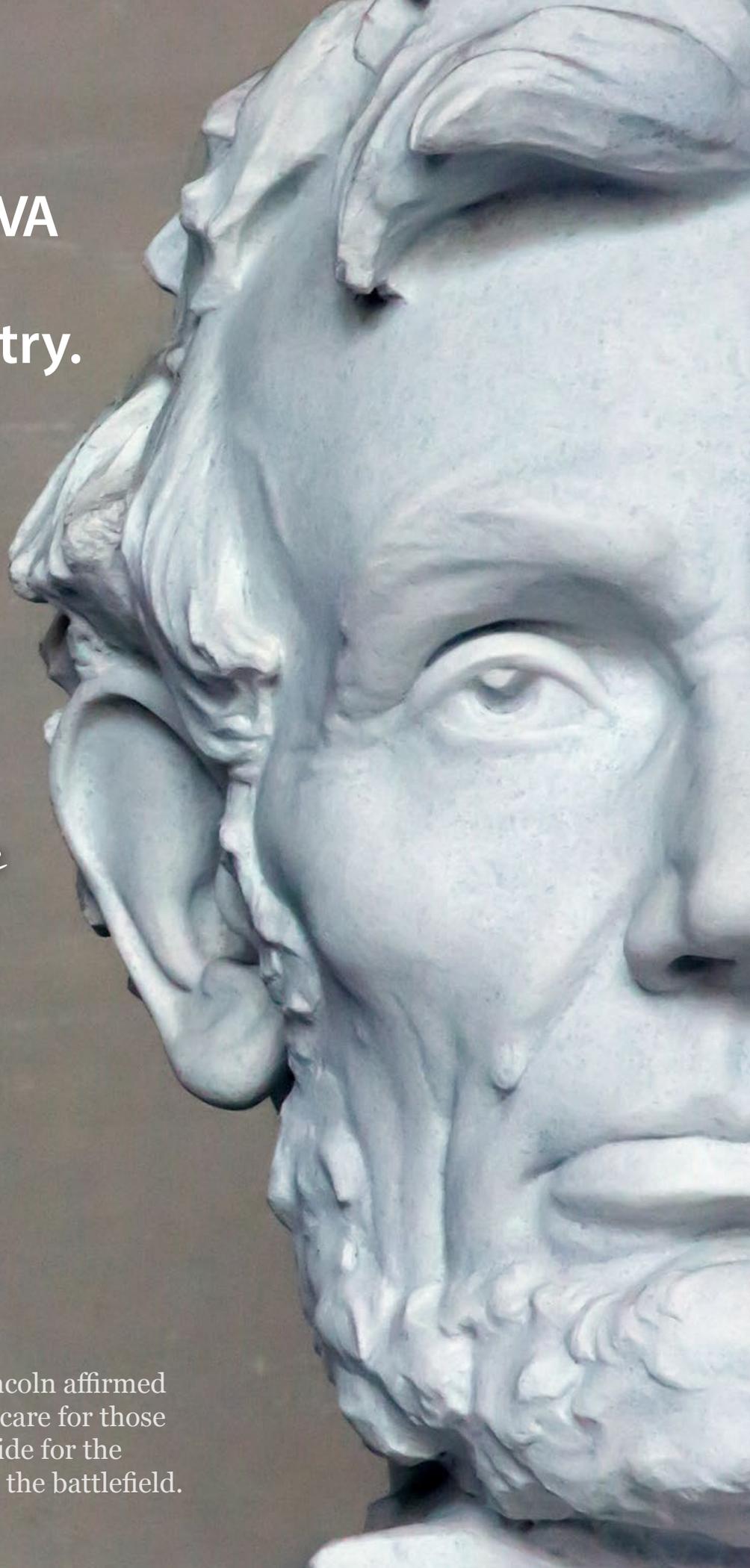
- Our mission, to care for those “who shall have borne the battle” and for their families and survivors cannot be matched.
- The VA values “I CARE” — Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence — define our culture and strengthen our dedication to those we serve.
- Many of the over 93,000 VA nursing personnel are Veterans themselves or continue to serve as Reservists.
- Those nurses who are not Veterans themselves view working at VA as their opportunity to serve the country.
- There is a great feeling of professional satisfaction serving our nation’s heroes.



Dedication to
the mission of VA
& the ability to
serve our country.

*To care
for those
"who shall
have borne
the battle"
and their
families*

With these words President Lincoln affirmed the government's obligation to care for those injured during war and to provide for the families of those who perish on the battlefield.



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Exceptional opportunities for career development.

- VA offers a wide-range of nursing careers. Examples include Registered Nurses, Advanced Practice RNs (APRN), Certified RN Anesthetists, Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses, Nurse Recruiters, Certified Nursing Assistants, and Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNLs).
- VA utilizes cross-training to support career progression, staff development, and retention.
- VA leads in the development of emerging roles for nurses such as transfer coordinators, Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) care managers, community care coordinators, CNLs and many more.
- VA supports nurses practicing at the top of their licensure.
- VA has a career ladder system for professional development and promotion based on performance.
- VA provides formal recognition for achieving specialty and other nursing certification.



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- A photograph of a person in a hospital setting, wearing blue scrubs, pointing their right index finger towards a computer monitor. The monitor is part of a medical workstation and displays some text. In the background, there is a hospital room with a chair, a table, and a yellow container. The overall scene is brightly lit.
- The Veterans Health Administration is America's largest integrated health care system with over 1,200 sites of care, serving 8.76 million enrolled Veterans each year.
 - VHA is consistently a high performer on quality indicators and clinical outcomes.
 - VA is a leader in clinical innovation.
 - VHA performs about 400,000 surgical procedures a year and is a national leader in surgical quality.
 - VA is affiliated with over 1,800 unique educational institutions offering over 7,000 training programs.

Providing the highest-quality care at the largest healthcare system in the country.

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- VA Nursing is highly valued within the integrated healthcare system and an integral member of the patient's treatment team.
- VA care is delivered via a collaborative team and focuses on teamwork between Nurse, Physician, and other health care partners.
- VA nurses are members of the interdisciplinary health care team and respected as integral to interdisciplinary collaboration and quality patient outcomes.
- As a nurse working in the VA, you can be an advocate for patients and collaborate with other healthcare team members who value nurses as part of their treatment team.

Being a respected member of the healthcare team.

Working with the latest & emerging technologies.

- VA nursing leads in innovations of technology including the first implementation of an electronic record, Bar-Code Medicine Administration (BCMA), and virtual technologies.
- VA is the leader in telehealth, with over 677,000 Veterans accessing VA care through telehealth modalities in 2015.
- Data-driven decision making is enabled through the use of multiple data support systems including the VHA Corporate Data Warehouse and Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Data to support continuous improvement toward the goal of high reliability and the standardization of best practices.
- The transformation of VA's delivery of health care and its effect on patients' health outcomes is accomplished through the use of programs such as: mobile applications, secure messaging, clinical video telehealth, home telehealth, and the Specialty Care Access Network-Extension for Community (SCAN-ECHO).
- Simulation-based Learning Resources. A National Simulation Center known as SimLEARN (Simulation Learning, Education, and Research Network) is a high-technology, immersive environment for train-the-trainer activities and the operational hub for coordination of national clinical simulation activities to meet the local simulation-based training needs of VA medical centers across the nation.







Support for training, continuing education & degrees.

- VA offers the autonomy to develop and provide continuing education programs for nurses to promote lifelong learning and professional development.
- VA offers generous nursing education scholarship opportunities, tuition reimbursement programs, educational opportunities that support virtual or face to face continuing education, and funding for advancing your formal education and participation in the numerous VA leadership programs.
- VA Scholarship Programs include National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI), Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP), and VA National Education for Employees Program (VANEPP):
 - NNEI is awarded to VA RNs seeking baccalaureate and advanced nursing degrees from an accredited education program.
 - EISP authorizes VA to award scholarships to employees pursuing degrees or training in health care disciplines.
 - VANEPP provides scholarship and replacement salary funding to VA facilities to allow certain scholarship participants who are enrolled full-time in an approved education program to accelerate their degree completion by attending school full time.
- VA offers ongoing internal training opportunities to personnel at every level of employment, ranging from mandatory developmental programs to competitive opportunities.
- VA is a federal government entity so VA employees with federal student loans may be eligible for the national loan forgiveness program.



- VA provides a work environment that supports the transition from new graduate to experienced nurse, including abundant opportunities for continuing education programs, as well as clinical learning experiences. In addition to the Post-Baccalaureate Nurse Residency Program specifically designed for recent BSN graduates at funded facilities, the RN Transition-to-Practice Program provides a nurse residency program for all new RN graduates.
- VA has a rich history of supporting nursing students in both their learning and career pursuits, providing clinical rotations to one out of every four professional nurses in the U.S. through our affiliations with nursing schools.
- The VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR) Program gives outstanding registered nursing students who have completed their junior year in an accredited clinical program the opportunity to develop competencies in clinical nursing while at a VA-approved health care facility. More than 50 percent of VALOR participants are hired as new registered nurses in VA.
- VA offers a wealth of formal and informal mentoring and preceptor programs and resources.





**Training &
development
opportunities
tailored to
new nurses.**



A great work/life balance.



- VA offers numerous benefits that offer nurses a balance between life and work.
- VA nurses have predictable and flexible schedules with guaranteed shifts.
- Many VA facilities have employee fitness centers on site.
- VA has child care centers for employees at some VHA facilities.
- Annual time off including:
 - 26 days of annual leave
 - 13 days of sick leave
 - 10 paid federal holidays
 - Ability to carry over up to 685 hours of accrued leave annually.

Extraordinary benefits, retirement & competitive pay.

- VA has a wide-range of federal benefits, most notably affordable high-quality health care and life insurance programs and flexible spending accounts.
- VA offers free employee parking at the majority of VHA facilities.
- VA offers Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) which provide professional, confidential counseling and consultation for little or no cost to the employee.
- VA offers up to 15 days a year of military leave support for reservists and National Guard, and supports our nurses' ability to serve both their country and Veterans.
- VA employees have the benefit of the Federal Employee Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan.
- VA also offers continuation of federal service from both military and other federal entities.





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Opportunity to practice in a variety of settings.

- The VA is a vast organization providing a great host of nursing responsibilities and both clinical and administrative practice settings.
- VA nurses have an advantage in that they can explore and embrace new found roles and continue to serve Veterans.
- VA has career opportunities for RNs in a variety of nursing specialties including cardiology, oncology, palliative care, and traumatic brain injury.
- VA has career opportunities for RNs in a variety of care-delivery settings including:
 - Acute
 - Ambulatory
 - Long-term care
 - Outpatient clinics
 - Mental health
 - Telecare
 - Home health
 - Spinal Cord Injury



Advancing nursing through research & evidence-based practice.

- VA Nurses have numerous opportunities to participate in research as both team members and principal investigators, ability to apply for grants, and utilize a wealth of established VA studies and research.
- VA has funded nursing researcher positions.
- VA is the leader in evidence-based staffing methodology that seeks to furnish nursing care based on the locally accepted nursing hours per patient day on each unit.
- The majority of VA facilities have notable academic affiliations with universities and collaborate with other federal agencies, nonprofits, and private industry.
- VA research impacts the health of the Veteran and often the healthcare industry as a whole.





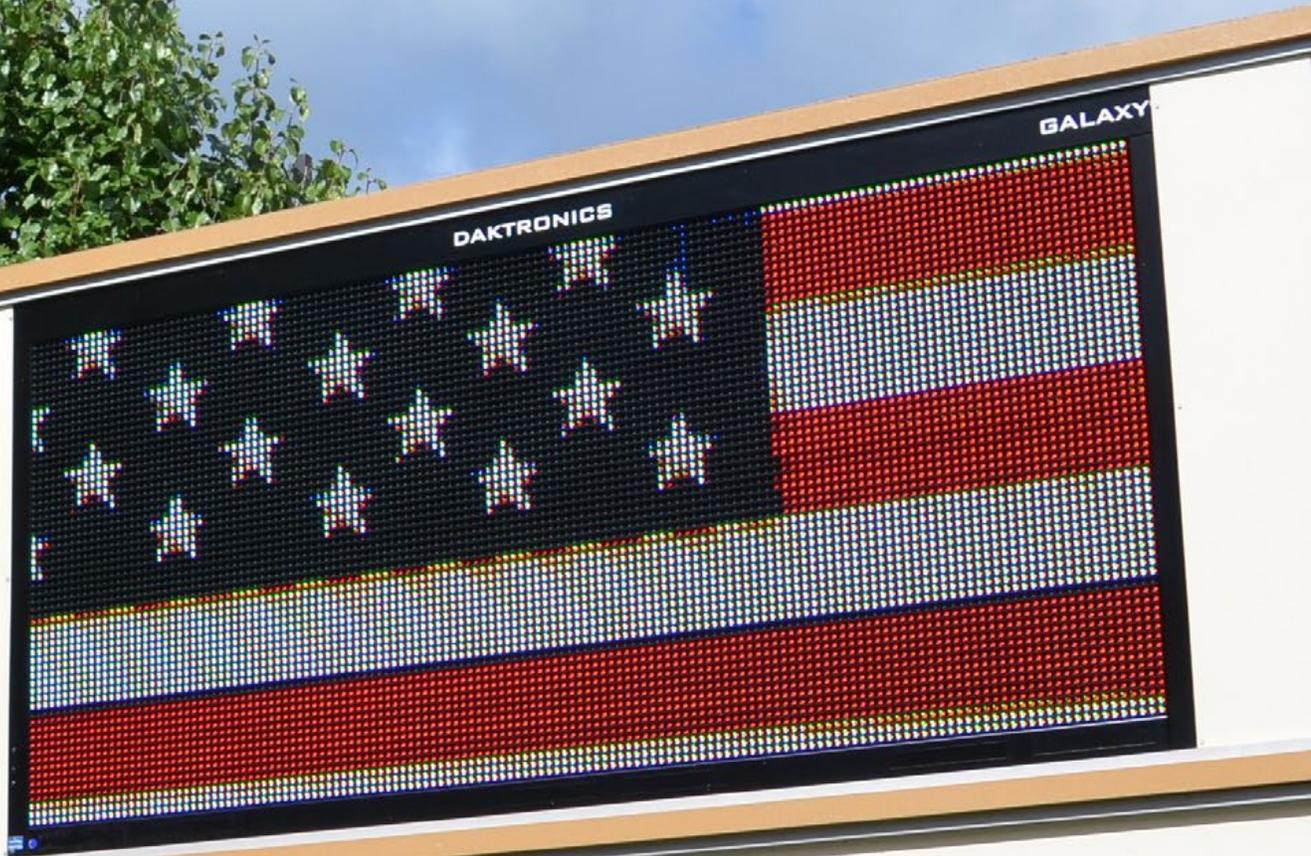
**Live & work
anywhere in
the country.**

- VA offers federal supremacy for nursing licensure, making your specific state license valid in all 50 states and other VA territories.
- VA operates 168 medical centers and over 1,200 sites of care to service Veterans.
- VA's integrated system allows for career mobility and opportunities to move anywhere within the VA.

VA

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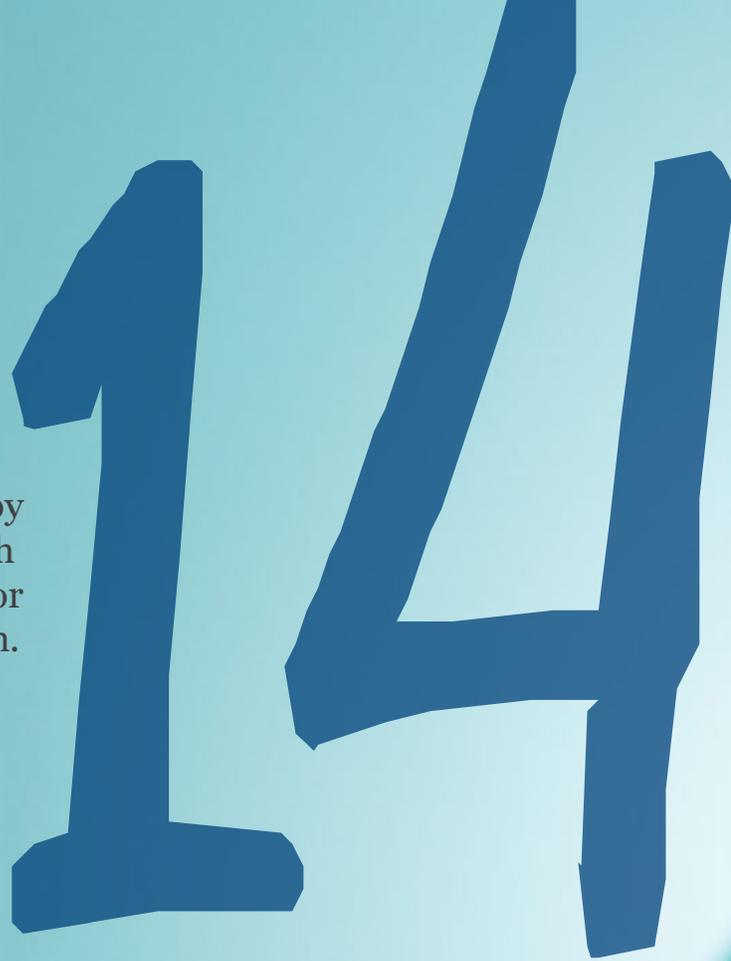
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A supportive, nation-wide community of practice.

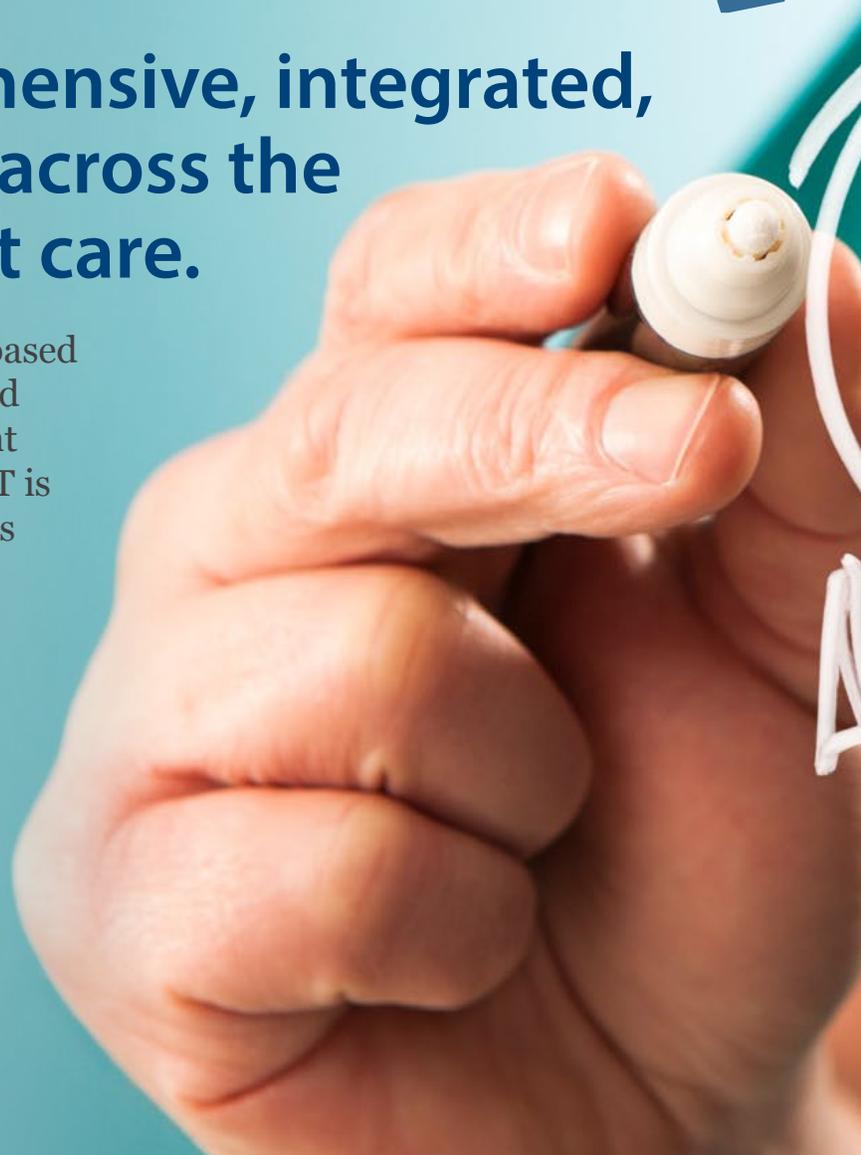
- VA nursing allows you to be part of a national health care system, giving you access to nurses nationwide for consultation and practice questions, developing research, and quality improvement.
- As one of the largest employers of nurses in the nation, VA offers the ability to learn from other nurses throughout the VA healthcare system.
- VA nurses are a huge family so VA encourages and provides an extended network of support outside the immediate institution.
- VA offers numerous communication tools and resources for nursing collaboration including national email groups, comprehensive national and local nursing websites, VA Pulse, and discussion boards.

- VA practices a whole health model with personal, proactive, comprehensive, and patient driven care.
- VA care values health promotion, disease prevention, population health management, and holistic approaches to care.
- VA offers unparalleled care coordination by covering critically important services, such as social work, that are often unavailable or difficult to obtain outside of the VA system.
- VA values home and community care provision, including ensuring Veterans have the services and equipment to be cared for in their home and funding community services that benefit the Veteran and their caregiver.



Providing comprehensive, integrated, whole-health care across the continuum of adult care.

- VA values interdisciplinary team based care and utilizes a patient-centered medical home model called Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT). PACT is the cornerstone of the New Models of Care transformation initiative intended to transform the way Veterans receive their care, oriented toward wellness and disease prevention resulting in improvements in Veteran satisfaction, improved healthcare outcomes and costs efficiencies.





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**Actively participate
in shared governance.**





- VA is a leader in shared governance and in providing multiple opportunities for nurses' ideas, voices and concerns to be addressed, including encouraging front-line nursing staff participation on national and local committees.
- The Magnet Recognition Program[®], and the related Pathway to Excellence[®] program refer to facilities demonstrating nursing excellence and innovation in practice and leadership, resulting in positive nurse satisfaction, low turnover and vacancies, as well as superior patient outcomes. VA currently has 6 Magnet or Pathways designated facilities and many more working to implement that standard of nursing excellence.
- VA has a Nursing Executive Leadership Board and Field Advisory Committee for shared and informed decision making.



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A commitment to patient safety.

- VA is a leader in patient safety and Safe Patient Handling initiatives that put technology and process into practice that promote and support the industry standards and recommendations which reduces injury to staff and Veterans.
- Since 2008, VHA has invested over \$200 million in the development and implementation of Safe Patient Handling programs nation-wide including new technologies and state-of-the-art equipment, such as ceiling lifts and new gurneys.
- VA Research led to the development of the clinical safety “champion” role to ensure safety adherence.





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Opportunity to improve & shape work through process change.

- VA supports innovation in clinical practice and leadership.
- VA encourages and supports proposals from all levels of nursing to improve and innovate care.
- VA provides opportunity for nurses to lead or participate in Lean Six Sigma improvement projects and other systems redesign activities, such as Rapid Process Improvement Workgroups.

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Develop & enhance leadership skills.

- VA supports nurses becoming an expert in any facet of patient care.
- The VHA Office of Nursing Service leads in the development of emerging roles for nurses, such as transfer coordinators, team care managers, community care coordinators, clinical nurse leaders, bar-code medication administration coordinators, informatics, and nurse executive roles.
- VA views leadership development as a key strategy for creating a continuum of quality leadership, engaging employees, driving results, and supporting innovation. These programs include, but are not limited to:
 - High Performance Development Model
 - Supervisor Training
 - VA Leadership Institutes
 - Nurse Manager Development
 - Executive Career Field Candidate Development Program (ECFCDP)
 - Health Care Leadership Institute
 - Nurse Executive Mentoring
 - Senior Leadership Academy





- VA Nurses make a difference in providing health-coaching and disease-process discussions that improve outcomes.
- VA values the contributions of nurses at all levels of practice.
- VA is the leader in full practice authority for APRNs.
- The VA programs such as the Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) and the VA Center for Innovation (VACI) contribute to providing cutting edge mental health treatment within settings in which nurses contribute and practice.
- VA has numerous Centers of Excellence in a variety of areas including Primary Care: Specialty Care (Perioperative, Vision, Women's Health, Integrated Muscular/Skeletal, Cancer, and Neurological Disorders such as Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis, and Parkinson's Disease).

A commitment to nursing innovation & leadership.

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- VA offers the unique opportunity to give back to America’s greatest heroes in a health care system designed specifically to meet their needs.
- VA is a leader in patient satisfaction.
- VA Nurses value the ability to “hear the stories” from Veterans to gain greater understanding of what they have been through, and be able to personally help them.
- VA’s patients come from varied types of military service and conflicts, which lends to differing wounds, associated comorbidities, and often high acuity. High acuity patients challenge nurses daily to hone critical thinking skills.



**The best patients
in the world—
Veterans!**





VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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www.va.gov/nursing